



BELMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Child Safety Policy

Child Safe Standard 2



Victorian schools are required to have a child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety that detail the principles that will guide the school in developing policies and procedures to create and maintain a child safe school environment. The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate the strong commitment of Belmont Primary School to the care, safety and wellbeing of all students at our school.

Scope

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

This policy applies to all staff, casual relief staff, volunteers and the school community to ensure:

- *a collective responsibility for student wellbeing in all school related environments;*
- *we endeavour to provide successful experiences for all children, where a sense of belonging and wellbeing are strengthened;*
- *we empower children who are vital and active participants in our school. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say;*
- *children develop positive social behaviours and problem solving skills;*
- *staff are confident, skilled and proactive in the management of student wellbeing issues;*
- *communication processes and protocols are clear and well known to ensure the effectiveness of student wellbeing support.*

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Belmont Primary School is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our care and decision-making. Belmont Primary School has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Belmont Primary School is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Belmont Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

In its planning, decision-making and operations Belmont Primary School will:

1. *Take a preventative, proactive and participatory approach to child safety;*
2. *Value and empower children to participate in decisions which affect their lives;*
3. *Foster a culture of openness that supports all persons to safely disclose risks of harm to children;*
4. *Respect diversity in cultures and child rearing practices while keeping child safety paramount;*
5. *Provide written guidance on appropriate conduct and behaviour towards children;*
6. *Strive to engage only the most suitable people to work with children and have high quality staff and volunteer supervision and professional development;*
7. *Ensure children know who to talk with if they are worried or are feeling unsafe, and that they are comfortable and encouraged to raise such issues;*
8. *Report suspected abuse, neglect or mistreatment promptly to the appropriate authorities;*
9. *Share information appropriately and lawfully with other organisations where the safety and wellbeing of children is at risk; and*
10. *Value the input of and communicate regularly with families and carers.*

IMPLEMENTATION

Student safety and wellbeing is a shared responsibility between school, staff, students, home and the community. This policy sits within a framework that includes all of the child safety standards for school. The appendix outlines the school's additional procedures for each standard at Belmont Primary School.

Responsibilities and Organisational Arrangements

Everyone employed or volunteering at Belmont Primary School has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all students is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

The school has allocated roles and responsibilities for child safety as follows:

The School Leadership Team is responsible for embedding a culture of child safety and does so by ensuring the following:

- Identifying and assessing potential risk of abuse to students and young people.
- Creating an environment for students and young people to be safe and to feel safe.
- Upholding high principles and standards for all staff members, casual relief staff, volunteers, and contractors.
- Promoting models of behaviour between adults, students and young people based on mutual respect and consideration.
- Developing and communicating child safe policies and procedures outlining the School's commitment to promoting children's wellbeing and protecting children from abuse.
- Developing and communicating a code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct and care required when working and interacting with children.
- Appointing a 'Child Safety Officer' to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand, meet and exceed their Child Safety obligations.
- Ensuring thorough and rigorous practices are applied in the recruitment and screening of all staff, CRTs, volunteers and contractors.
- Ensuring that staff and other members of the school community have regular and appropriate learning to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters.
- Promoting inclusion of all children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds and those with disabilities.
- Empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety and then incorporate this feedback to improve your policies and practices.
- Immediately responding to any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse in accordance with its reporting requirements.
- Providing regular opportunities to clarify and confirm legislative obligations, policies and procedures in relation to child and young people's protection and wellbeing.
- Ensuring the school meets the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in Ministerial Order No. 870.

Staff Members, Casual Relief Teachers (CRTs), Volunteers and Contractors are responsible for:

- Treating students and young people with dignity and respect, acting with propriety, providing a duty of care, and protecting children and young people in their care.
- Understanding and complying with legislative requirements and internal school processes in the course of their work.
- Demonstrating a commitment to displaying appropriate behaviours in accordance with the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Providing a physically and psychologically safe environment where the wellbeing of children and young people is nurtured.
- Undertaking regular training and education in order to understand their individual responsibilities in relation to child safety and the wellbeing of students and young people.

- Immediately report any child safety complaint, disclosure, breach of the Child Safety Code of Conduct or suspected abuse to the school's Child Safety Officer or a member of the school Leadership Team.
- Assisting the Leadership Team in empowering and promoting the participation of children in decision-making by providing opportunities for children to express their views on child safety.
- Assisting children and young people to develop positive, responsible and caring attitudes and behaviours which recognise the rights of all people to be safe and free from abuse.
- Following the school's Child Safety Code of Conduct.

Student Safety and Participation

At Belmont Primary School, we actively encourage all students to openly express their views and feel comfortable about giving voice to the things that are important to them. We teach our children about their rights and the school values, to support them to recognise and know what they can do if they feel unsafe and enable them to understand, discuss and report on child safety. We listen to and act on any concerns students, or their parents or carers, raise with us.

Our whole school approach to promoting participation and empowerment of children comes through the delivery of a rich and rigorous curriculum that promotes social and emotional learning and is supplemented by programs and strategies such as:

- *Brave Hearts program*
- *Anti-Bullying and Cyber Safety Program*
- *Life Education Van*
- *Restorative approaches*
- *Gardening Club*
- *Year 6 leadership squads*
- *Classroom Circles*
- *Buddies program- Prep and Year 6*
- *Student Awards, relating to school values*
- *Transition programs*
- *Lunchtime Club, Play Pod sessions and other lunchtime activities*

We support student wellbeing and safety through support structures that include:

- *Monitoring of and responding to protracted student absences.*
- *Establishing Student Support Groups and Care Teams for children in need.*
- *Developing Individual Learning Improvement Plans (ILIPS) which may include reference to behaviour or wellbeing goals and Behaviour Management Plans.*
- *Monitoring playground and classroom behaviours and implementing the school's behaviour management approach as necessary.*
- *Recording incidents and monitoring behaviour and performance using the Compass Management System.*
- *Accessing support for students and staff from Network School Support Services (SSS), Visiting Teachers and the School Nurse when required.*
- *Involving outside services such as Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) case managers and support workers and other allied professionals as required.*
- *Standing items on both staff meeting and leadership meeting agendas with regards to students at potential risk or requiring ongoing care and monitoring.*

Reporting and Responding

Our school has developed a policy that outlines its responsibilities with regards to obligations and processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse. Our school records any child safety complaints, disclosures or breaches of the Child Safety Code of Conduct, and stores the records in accordance with security and privacy requirements.

Our policy assists staff, volunteers and families to:

- identify the indicators of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- understand how a 'reasonable belief' is formed
- make a report of a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with mandatory reporting obligations under child protection law and their legal obligations relating to criminal child abuse and grooming under criminal law.

Our school has also established internal processes to ensure that appropriate action is taken to respond to concerns about the wellbeing and/or safety of a student. Our complaints and disclosure processes are outlined and detailed in the following policies and procedures:

- *Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy*
- *Student Engagement Policy*
- *Duty of Care Policy*
- *Issues Resolution Policy*

Screening and Recruitment of School Staff

Belmont Primary School will take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with our children. When recruiting and selecting employees, contractors and volunteers involved in child-connected work, we make all reasonable efforts to:

- confirm the applicant's Working with Children Check and National Police Check status and/or professional registration (as relevant)
- obtain proof of personal identity and any professional or other qualifications
- verify the applicant's history of work involving children
- obtain references that address the applicant's suitability for the job and working with children.

We have processes for monitoring and assessing the continuing suitability of school staff to work with children, including regular reviews of the status of Working with Children Checks (WWCC) and staff professional registration requirements such as Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) registration.

Child Safety – Education and Training for School Staff

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in Belmont Primary School understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility. Belmont Primary School provides employees and volunteers with regular and appropriate opportunities to develop their knowledge of, openness to and ability to address child safety matters. This includes:

- An induction program for all new and returning staff
- Ongoing training and professional learning to ensure that everyone understands their professional and legal obligations and responsibilities, and the procedures for reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect
- Time to complete the DET (Department of Education and Training) Mandatory Reporting module at: <http://elearn.com.au/det/protectingchildren>
- Time allocated during staff meetings for professional learning in the area and to ensure that all staff are aware of their legal obligations.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to develop their skills to protect children from abuse and to promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand Belmont Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (and reflects the school's *Child Safe Code of Conduct*). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Risk Management

At Belmont Primary School we are committed to proactively and systematically identifying and assessing risks to student safety across our whole school environment, and reducing or eliminating (where possible) all potential sources of harm. We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (*for example, any doors that can lock*), and online environments (*for example, no staff or school based volunteer is to have contact with a student on social media*). If the school identifies risks of child abuse occurring in one or more school environments the Principal must make a record of those risks and specify the action(s) the school will take to reduce or remove the risks (risk controls).

Explanatory note: Different risk controls may be necessary for particular groups of children depending on the nature of the risk and the diversity characteristics of children affected by the risk.

As part of its risk management strategy and practices, the school will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of its risk controls. At least annually, the school must ensure that appropriate guidance and training is provided to the individual members of the school staff about:

- individual and collective obligations and responsibilities for managing the risk of child abuse;
- child abuse risks in the school environment; and
- the school's current child safety standards.

RELATED POLICIES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- Duty of Care Policy
- Volunteers Policy
- Visitors Policy
- Child Safety - Code of Conduct
- Child Safety – Statement of Commitment
- Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy and Procedures
- DET Child Safe Standards
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/safeenviro.aspx>
- DET Child Protection Reporting Obligations
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/childprotection/Pages/reportobligations.aspx>

RESOURCES AND REFERENCES:

- Victorian Government, *Education and Reform Act 2006, Gazette No. S2, January 2016, Child Safe Standards - Managing the Risk of Child Abuse in Schools, Ministerial Order No. 870*
- Victorian Registration and Qualification Authority (2016) *Information Sheet. Child Safe Standard 2: A child safety policy or a statement of commitment to child safety*
- Commission for Children and Young People (2015) *A Guide For Creating A Child Safe Organisation, Version 2.0*
- *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*
- *eLearning module: Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting and Other Obligations*
- State of Victoria (2010) *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: A joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed every two years in accordance with the school's policy schedule or as required if regulations or circumstances change.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in.....

February 2019

Review Date: 2021



APPENDIX A

VICTORIAN CHILD SAFE STANDARDS AT BELMONT PRIMARY SCHOOL



STANDARD 1: Strategies to embed an organisational culture of child safety, including through effective leadership arrangements.

- All school policies outline staff responsibilities to keep students safe.
- Assigning the role of 'Child Safety Officer' to promote child safety and support all members of the school community to understand and meet our child safety obligations.
- The leadership team oversees child safety and meets regularly to monitor the school's effectiveness in relation to a child safe culture.
- All adult visitors sign in and wear a 'Visitor' badge or lanyard to identify them whilst they are in the school during standard school hours.
- Staff and Students regularly practise emergency procedures including onsite evacuations and lock down procedures.
- Security cameras are being investigated for installation in key areas around the school.
- Child Safe Standards listed as a standing item on agendas for School Council, Staff and Leadership team meetings.
- Staff meetings include regular discussion items around child safe practices.
- School Council regularly informed of Mandatory Reporting requirements of staff and briefed on Child Safe requirements.

STANDARD 2: A child safety policy or statement of commitment to child safety.

- A Statement of Commitment to Child Safety has been developed.
- A Child Safe Policy has been developed and endorsed by School Council.
- The Child Safety Policy is made available for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings.
- All staff are provided access to Ministerial Order 870 (*stored on Staff Shared Drive*).
- Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website.

STANDARD 3: A code of conduct that establishes clear expectations for appropriate behaviour with children.

- A Child Safe Code of Conduct has been developed and endorsed by School Council.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct is provided for new staff as part of their induction, and reviewed regularly by existing staff at staff meetings. This includes Education Support staff, external providers such as external music teachers, ICT and maintenance staff.
- All staff are provided access to Ministerial Order 870 and Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Code of Conduct.
- Parents and Community have access to the documents on the school website or from the front office upon request.

STANDARD 4: Screening, supervision, training and other human resources practices that reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing personnel.

- Staff induction program includes information regarding child safety encompassing matters related to protecting all children from child abuse, and responding to incidents or allegations of child abuse.
- Our organisation has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers which clearly state the experience, qualifications, qualities and attributes expected from the successful applicant.
- Casual Relief Teachers are required to provide VIT registration which is recorded and a copy of VIT registration cards is retained on file.
- All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check (WWC) and to provide evidence of this check.
- External organisations working with students (eg: Police Officers, Speech Pathologists, NDIS workers) at our school are always in direct line of sight supervision by a staff member or parent/carer.
- Regular Professional Development is provided for staff as deemed necessary with regards to trauma informed practice, responding appropriately to abuse, understanding behavioural issues and disabilities.
- The Child Safety Code of Conduct is publicly available on the school website. Children and their families are encouraged to raise any concerns about the behaviour of any person, and can expect to be listened to and supported.

STANDARD 5: Processes for responding to and reporting suspected child abuse.

- The School's Child Safety Reporting Obligations Policy is followed and reviewed regularly by staff.
- Staff update their knowledge via an on-line course every year.
- The Principal team or Child Safety Officer will support staff to make mandatory reports.
- All staff are provided with the *Protect - Four Critical Actions* poster to display in their room.
- Staff have access to contact details for Family First, Department of Health and Human Services, and Police (000).

STANDARD 6: Strategies to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse.

- Development of the school's Child Safe Risk Assessment matrix which is reviewed annually and upon any knowledge of potential or existing risk.
- Developing, recording and communicating clear processes for removing risks to children (eg Bullying Prevention, Cyber Safety, ICT acceptable use, Duty of Care, Yard Supervision, Excursions and Camps).
- Providing staff with training and resources in identifying child abuse risks.
- Reinforcing/reviewing supervision of children requirements for staff and volunteers.
- Recognising and adapting to the needs of children and communities, including Aboriginal children, culturally and/or linguistically diverse children and children with a disability. For example, acknowledgement that greater staff or volunteer to child ratios may be needed for some children with a disability.
- Recognising and addressing risks to children with a culturally and/or linguistically diverse background, which might exist because of their experiences, by increasing communication with families to build trust and understanding of school activities.
- Recognising and addressing risks for children with a disability, such as communication barriers when telling an adult they feel unsafe.
- Adhering to the Child Safety Code of Conduct.
- Developing Behaviour Management and Safety Plans for students when necessary.
- Induction for all visitors, staff, volunteers and contractors.
- Access supports such as Counselling or Network Student Support Services for students in need.
- Assessment of new or changed physical environments for child safety risks.
- Pre-employment reference checks that include checking for child safety.
- Criminal history checks and confirming currency of Working with Children Checks and Victorian Institute of Teaching registration.
- Teachers accompany students to and from specialist classrooms.
- Younger students always move around the school in pairs or small groups. For example, toilet use.

STANDARD 7: Strategies to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

- Regular reference to the School Values.
- Social and Emotional learning which may include content like that provided through the *Resilience, Rights and Respectful Relationships* curriculum.
- Providing students with child-appropriate and accessible information about their rights to feel safe and how they can raise concerns about their safety (eg *Ditto's 3 Rules for Keeping Safe*).
- Student leadership program (years 5-6) and Student Forums.
- Community Circles implemented in all classrooms.
- Access to external providers such as Brave Hearts program and Life Ed Van.
- Cyber Safety awareness program
- Puberty program (Years 5-6) and Mother & Daughters Session (Year 4).
- Lunch time club and Play Pod run by the Education Support Staff 2-3 times per week.
- Anti-bullying audits or other teacher devised feedback.
- Transition program.
- Student Attendance Policy
- Digital Media Policy, Cyber Safety Policy and ICT Acceptable-Use Agreements
- Inclusion and Diversity Policy
- Student Engagement Policy